

SYNOPSIS

Wheat Ridge – The Other Christmas Seal

The Booklet Seals (1910-1942)



1911
pane

Coverage and Development. This one-frame exhibit tells the complete and balanced story of the booklet Christmas Seals of the Wheat Ridge, Colorado, Lutheran Sanitarium. It begins with seal production (essays, proofs, and booklet construction), continues with a chronological display of booklet panes and examples of seal usage, and concludes with the gradual demise of the booklet seal in favor of sheets of seals.

Scope and Limits. The scope includes:

- Seal production – sufficient material to tell the story of seal, pane, and booklet production.
- Mint booklet panes from each year (except 1910 where none are known to exist).
- Tied-on examples during the intended period of use with a variety of rates, origins, and destinations.

Items beyond the scope of this exhibit include:

- Errors, such as the 1914 red/black omitted.
- Pane varieties that differ only in margin markings.
- Non-booklet seal varieties, such as the 1938 blue only.

Significance. Although designated in Green's Catalog as a "U.S. Local Seal," Wheat Ridge seals were national in distribution. They were sold throughout the United States in the congregations of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The longevity of these seals (1910 to present) is second only to the National Christmas Seal. In addition, it is the only U.S. charity authorized to use the American Lung Association's trademark term "Christmas Seals."

Philatelic/Related Knowledge. Knowledge of seal production is demonstrated by essays, productions proofs, progressive color proofs, booklet covers, and booklet assembly.

Knowledge of tied-on covers is demonstrated by seal use during the intended period (see 1915 exception) and by the correct postage affixed to a variety of covers (postcards, first class, third class, registered mail, and foreign destinations).

Personal Study/Research. Conducted extensive research of Wheat Ridge Foundation archives at the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri. Findings included:

- Early Sanitarium documents and photos.
- Seal sales and production figures.
- Ratio of booklet to sheet seals.

Located and communicated with a number of "old time" Wheat Ridge collectors.

This research corrected several items found in Green's Catalog, Part II, U. S. Local Seals:

- All booklets do not contain 25 seals.
- 1919 Essay date is not larger than the regular issue date.
- 1920 Essay does have a dot after "Ridge".
- 1919 Essay is scarcer than the 1920 essay.

Condition. Best condition known to exist. 1919 essay has missing corner (the only other one that I am aware of has a large tear). Some panes are only found with poor centering (1920), rough perfs (1913), or blurred image (1925).

Covers are in excellent condition for their scarcity. Seals are tied to the cover with readable cancels.

Rarity. Non-philatelic tied-on covers and some panes are very difficult to acquire. I estimate that the older Wheat Ridge seals are 100 to 600 times scarcer than the National Christmas Seals. I am aware of the existence of three or less of the following items: 1919 essay, 1912 pane, 1920 pane, 1910 on cover, and 1920 on cover. Exhibit includes two covers with a foreign destination.